BRITISH COLUMBIA

Education Report

SECONDARY SCHOOL APPRENTICESHIP AWARDS

Minister Bond with Delta school district scholarship winners (l-r) Ryan Van Vliet (Horticulture), Sarah Saunders (Culinary Arts), Nicole Dillon (Hairdressing), and Ryan Coleman (Automotive).

During a visit to the Delta school district, Minister Bond presented scholarships to four graduates of the Secondary School Apprenticeship (SSA) program. A record number of scholarships totalling $375,000 were awarded throughout B.C. The SSA program puts students on the fast track to a career by allowing them to earn their high school diploma, and invaluable work experience in the trades. ***Read more.***

HOT TOPIC

You may have heard the phrase "school-centered leadership", but it's likely you're a little unclear about what it actually means. In a nutshell, school-centered leadership is an educational approach that recognizes that a principal, teachers and parents know the needs of the students in their school better than anyone else. Together with school trustees, they are in the best position to make decisions in the interest of those students.

A more accurate term for this kind of educational approach is student-centered leadership, because decisions are made as close to the students as possible.

For me, a more accurate student-centered leadership also connects the school planning process with the allocation of funds needed to deliver the plan. It puts into action the idea that a school's budget should mirror its goals.

Currently, School Planning Councils (SPCs) develop school plans. Each SPC is made up of a teacher, a principal, three parents, and, in the case of secondary schools, a student. School plans set goals and identify how schools will achieve those goals. The plans then go to school boards for approval, and complement the district's accountability contract.

Several districts have used some form of student-centered leadership for years. Now, the Ministry of Education is exploring the idea with other boards – and a significant number have indicated an interest.

Student-centered leadership is designed to strengthen the working relationships of the people nearest students, and provide an opportunity for people at the school level to make informed and meaningful decisions that benefit all students.

Message from Minister Shirley Bond

Our government has recently reached out to the education community through initiatives like the Learning Roundtable and the Throne Speech commitment to visit all 60 school districts. These initiatives are rooted in a single belief: we can make B.C.'s world-class education system even better by bringing education partners together to share ideas and learn from each other.

Honourable Shirley Bond Minister of Education

In that spirit, I am proud to announce an international conference called *Interactive Innovations: A Showcase of Learners and Learning*. This web-based conference will take place May 25 and 26 in five locations throughout B.C., and feature education experts from Canada, the U.S., and around the world.

What makes this conference unique is it is web-based. Participants at five locations—Kelowna, Nelson, Prince George, Victoria and Whistler—will be able to simultaneously pursue different themes. For instance, participants will be able to interact in the keynote session of their choice, no matter what site they attend.

I encourage your district to send a team to one of the five sites. This is another opportunity for people in B.C.'s K–12 system to come together to make a great education system even better. For more information ***(web)***

Reading Corner

"Owen & Mzee: The True Story of a Remarkable Friendship"

Written by Craig Hatkoff

Pictures by Peter Greste

The book in this issue's Reading Corner has a special place in my family's library.

I first encountered *Owen & Mzee: The True Story of a Remarkable Friendship* at Ridgeview elementary in West Vancouver and I later presented Governor General Michaëlle Jean with a copy of this book.

Owen & Mzee is an inspirational story with a valuable message for everyone from students to governments.